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ABSTRACT

This study provides an evaluation of the quality of immersion instruction in English as a second language in the Mele-Maat School, an English-medium, British-administered Polynesian school in Vanuatu, an independent South Pacific nation. The study consisted of one year of baseline data gathering and a second year for replication using standardized tests, observations, video- and audiotaping, interviews with students and teachers, student case studies, and oral and written language sample assessments by panels of U.S. language experts. The effectiveness of the Tate System of English Language Instruction used throughout the South Pacific and based on the empiricist or naturalistic theory of language learning was specifically addressed. Findings indicated that Mele-Maat students' oral and written English was of acceptable, understandable quality by U.S. standards and that their listening and reading achievement was outstanding. (MSE)

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MELE-MAAT REVISITED

James C. Stone

Précis. Immersion programs for teaching a second language are in the ascendancy, as articles in the summer issue of TEQ attested. Stone headed a team that evaluated second language learning in English in Vanuatu, an independent South Pacific nation. (Formerly, Vanuatu was the New Hebrides, governed jointly by the British and French.) The residents of Vanuatu have their own native language. Most of the children, however, attend schools administered by the British in which all instruction in in English. The study--a two year evaluation of the quality of the teaching of English--was sponsored by the South Pacific Commission, an inter-government agency. The South Pacific Commission chose the Mele-Maat School in Vanuatu to be the site of the in-depth study because it was a typical school where all instruction was in English, beginning with the first grade. This report is a follow-up to a previously published base-line study. Stone's conclusions about the quality of the oral and written English of Mele-Maat students and their teachers raises questions about first and second language learning in U.S. schools.

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Michener begins his famous Tales of the South Pacific with these lines:

> I wish I could tell you about the South Pacific. The way it actually is. The endless ocean. The infinite specks of coral we call islands. Coconut palms nodding gracefully toward the ocean. Reefs upon which waves break into spray, and inner lagoons, lovely beyond description . . .

In turn, I wish I could tell you about Mele-Maat. The way it actually is:

- the delightful, happy, eager, Polynesian children in their blue and white school uniforms.
- the enthusiastic, dedicated, talented, native teachers.
- the two small, picturesque country villages with their separate, indigenous languages.
- the tiny homes where a sparse existence is eked out by fathers who fish and mothers who garden.[1]

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• the white sandy beaches and cobalt bays peopled by suntanned tourists from Australia and New Zealand.

Instead, our evaluative thoughts about Mele-Maat are explained, beginning with the problem that took us there, the theoretical issue that is at the heart of the problem, the questions that guided the inquiry, the methods used to answer them, and the findings.

The Problem. The Mele-Maat community of two small rural villages is a polyglot of languages. Two-thirds of the children speak Mele, one-third Maat. (The people of Maat were moved to Mele ten years ago after a hurricane nearly demolished their outer island.) The two villages converse with each other in a third language, Bislamar, a pidgin tongue derived from Portuguese and English that is the universal language among Polynesians. Also, there is, of course, English, the lingua franca of Vanuatu and the language of school, business, and commerce. (Like other Polynesians, there is no written form of these various languages, except for English.) Then, there is French. In Vanuatu, there also are French schools, administered by the French government, offering immersion-type language programs that are free to the children of Mele and Maat. Thus, within a single Mele-Maat family, children might be attending an English-speaking school and/or a French-speaking school. Within such a family, communication might be carried on in their native tongue of Mele or Maat, in Bislamar, and in two "foreign" tongues; a total of five different languages! (And Americans struggle with one!) Some linguists have been critical of immersion programs, particularly the modified English-type at Mele-Maat. They believe students are missing out on the basics of language acquisition--grammar and punctuation--and they have as language models native teachers for whom English is their second language. (By contrast, the French schools in Vanuatu use native French teachers imported from France.) The South Pacific Commission (SPC) was the target of this criticism because it developed the Tate System of English Language Instruction used throughout the South Pacific and the SPC provided the textbooks, teaching materials, and teachers' manuals free to local schools. These were the materials (and the only materials) used in English language immersion-type programs like the one at Mele-Maat. As a result of mounting criticism, the SPC decided to fund a two-year case study at a single typical school to determine the quality of the teaching of English. The SPC invited an American evaluator to head the Australian-U.S. study team. Such a study, the SPC reasoned, would quell the fire of criticism.

Theories of Language Instruction. Far from quelling the fire, the evaluation rekindled a long-standing, deep-seated, division among language experts. Like other parts of the world (Lambert, 1984, Graham, 1984), the region served by the SPC is divided into two camps on language teaching. In The Language Teaching Controversy, Diller (1978) described these positions as the empiricist vs. the rationalist.

Empiricists believe language exists essentially as speech, not as writing, and that it is acquired through establishing a set of habits or patterns of responses by way of purposeful, functional, conversation (Moulton, 1961). Further, empiricists

say language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say, thus giving rise to the increasing popularity of referring to this position as the naturalistic mode of language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). The instructor's role is to provide functional situations for the use of language rather than to teach about the language. As children learned their first language at their parent's knee, orally, responding naturally to everyday stimuli, it followed that a second language should be acquired "at the teacher's knee," while engaging in purposeful dialogue. Thus, there are immersion-type programs such as the one at Mele-Maat where, from the first grade, conversing in English means learning to communicate while also learning subject matter content.

The Tate System of English Language Instruction used throughout the South Pacific is based on the empiricist (naturalistic) approach. Its major critics are university scholars, most notably those at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, who are devout rationalists (Chomsky, 1965). Rationalism, or structural linguistics, represents the scientific approach to language acquisition in which the learning of fundamental principles that govern the structure of language is basic. For example, knowledge of the rules of grammar is the key to understanding, to generalizing, to vocabulary expansion, and to thinking in the language. A key argument of "grammarians" is that native teachers, who provide instruction in English as a second language in schools like Mele-Maat, are poor role models who, at best, teach pidgin English, and that "proper" English can only be acquired through a grammar, textbook approach.

Diller concluded:

> It is really impossible to refute either one of these theories of language to the satisfaction of anyone who is deeply committed to the other theory.

Therein Diller described the theoretical battleground in which the Mele-Maat evaluation is embedded. The study was based on the hypothesis that language, first and foremost, is a medium of informal communication and that the purpose of the communication is "to establish social identity and to organize one's own perception of the world" (Graham, 1984). A corollary hypothesis was that, in an immersion-type program like Mele-Maat, children learn English while also learning to spell, read, write, and understand math, science, the arts, history, and geography.

The Design. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the teaching of English and instruction in English as a second language in the Mele-Maat School over a two-year period (Stone, 1980). The questions to be answered and methods of evaluation used were:

1. What is the quality of teaching of ESL and English as the medium of instruction, as appraised by school site observations that are evaluated by a panel of ESL specialists? (Section 1)

2. What is the level of pupil reading and listening achievement in English, as measured by the Gap Reading Comprehension Test and the Micronesian Achievement Test Series? (Section 2)

3. What is the level of pupil and teacher writing competence in English as determined by written samples that are evaluated by a panel of ESL specialists? (Section 3)

4. What is the level of pupil and teacher oral competence in English, as determined by audiotaped samples that are evaluated by a panel of ESL specialists? (Section 4)

5. What is the attitude of pupils and teachers toward English and schooling at Mele-Maat, as assessed by interviews, case studies, and observations? (Sections 5 and 6)

6. How has the school changed and the instruction modified since the baseline evaluation; as appraised by comparison samples of pupil and teacher written and oral English, questionnaires, interviews, observations, and analysis of audio and video tapes? (Sections 3, 4, 5, 6) (Section 7 contains summary, conclusions, and implications.)

The Sample. The sample was one British primary school, comprised of six teachers, (one of whom also served as the principal), and approximately 200 pupils, classes 1-6. (In the British system, classes are the same as grades.)

Beginning with class six, the teachers' ages were 22, 33, 56, 44, 32, and 39. The educational background of four of the teachers including the principal teacher was seven years of primary education and one-to-two years of teacher training; of two of the teachers, three years of high school (a "Form 3 Leaving Certificate"), and two years of teacher training. The teachers' colleges attended were in Vanuatu, administered by the British, with Australian/New Zealand faculties. All instruction was in English. The number of years of teaching of the six instructors ranged from 2-1/2 to 30. The teacher with 30 years experience had also served as a principal for ten years, but was not the site administrator of Mele-Maat at the time of the study. By U.S. standards, the academic preparation of the teachers was comparable to what prevailed in U.S. elementary schools at the turn of the century.

In terms of languages, the sample represented: (1) Mele, (2) Maat, (3) Bislamar, (4) English, the lingua franca; and (5) French, the competing lingua franca. All six teachers and approximately half of the students communicated to some degree in all five languages. None of the teachers or students had traveled beyond the confines of Vanuatu.

SECTION 1. ESL TEACHING AND ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

This section begins with a review of what teachers said about how they taught oral English and selected observations of what teachers and pupils were doing in their classrooms. The section concludes with what teachers said about how they taught reading and writing and selected observations of this instruction.

How Teachers Said They Taught Oral English. In organizing their classes in oral English, the teachers said they had the children sit informally in front of them where they could maintain eye contact with them. Then, they presented their lessons and pupils practiced their English "by doing most of the talking, followed by testing and written work."

Asel, the second class teacher, mentioned dividing her class in half, or by boys/girls, then individualizing her teaching. She also mentioned using reading charts. Allan, the fifth class teacher, stated he copied the instructions for the night before "onto a sheet of paper which goes into a folder" that he referred to while teaching. He also said he got his teaching aids ready when he arrived at school and copied sentences on the board so they were there when the pupils came into the room.

The teachers of grades 1-4 agreed that the children were more responsive in oral work than in other subjects like math. This may be because the teachers felt more confident about teaching oral work since this had been emphasized in in-service work during the previous year. The two upper class teachers felt students responded equally to oral English and the other subjects they taught. This may be related to their feeling of competence across subject matter fields.

Generally, the teachers said the children preferred to respond "naturally" in single words or phrases. The teachers stated they encouraged their students to respond in whole sentences and sometimes even started sentences for them. Selwyn, the sixth class teacher, said,

> I try my best to get them to respond in sentences rather than words or phrases since they now are in their last year of primary school and should be able to do this readily.

Edwin, the fourth class teacher, added,

> When a lesson has been planned, all these points--speech patterns, word drills, questions--must be in that lesson everyday!

In oral lessons, the teachers said they used speech and verb drills "very often." Four said they used questions "very often," but two indicated they used them only "as needed." Selwyn added, "I do speech and verb drills two or three times a week and only use questions if the oral work has to do with questions."

Three teachers self-described their classroom atmosphere as "formal", the other three "somewhat informal" (Goodlad, 1984). All described how they were using teaching aids such as pictures, cut-outs, cans, rocks, diagrams, charts, and models. These were teaching aids they had either made or found. Several added they relied heavily on "pretend aids" (role-playing).

The evaluators asked what the teachers did to encourage pupils to think because they had observed so few instances of this during the baseline evaluation. Three did not respond to this question. John, the third class teachers, said he encouraged thinking by asking questions that required the

students to change tenses in order to respond correctly or by posing questions that had no set response. Selwyn, the sixth class teacher, said

> I let them do something I know they want to do and can do--like talking about applying something we've discussed in class or by having them give their own examples.

ORAL ENGLISH TEACHING OBSERVATIONS

Sixth Class. Selwyn instructed the students to bring their chairs up close to the front of the room and directed four pupils to go to various parts of the room with assigned roles. He began the lesson, saying, "Let's pretend that this is _____ and that (name of pupil in one corner of the room) is _____."

The class repeated what the teacher said and this was followed by individual, spontaneous responses. The drill was on when and while. After making up sentences using while, Selwyn had the class make up their own sentences about the same situations using when. He called on various pupils to come to the board and write phrases that he gave orally. The class, in unison, read the written phrases out loud. This was repeated by five or six pupils individually, followed by whole-class repetition, followed by spontaneous conversation. Then the students returned to their desks, opened their books, and wrote sentences on their own about "Bob" using when and while. Selwyn said this was an example of pupils' "individualizing." He circulated throughout the room, stopping a moment to check or converse with each pupil. The observer also circulated and noted that most of the pupils were writing correct sentences with when and while but some were not punctuating correctly (omitting commas). This lesson was a typical example of combining oral and written work, i.e., following the syllabus, using the textbook, and encouraging responses from pupils.

Fifth Class. The pupils were sitting on the floor in front of the teacher. Colored pictures of math shapes such as cones, triangles, rectangles, boxes--all drawn by the pupils--were on display around the room. There were several stacks of different sized cans in the front of the room for use in counting and computing.

The lesson began by Allan asking the pupils to spell words as he pronounced them. As pupils spelled, he wrote the words on the board. He was careful to sound out the more difficult ones such as "cabbage," "rubbish," "rabbit," "apples," "open," "happy," "opposite," and "vegetables." Unison response was used first, then he called on individual pupils to pronounce the words as he pointed to them on the board. This was followed by a "Simon says" game. Allan asked the class "What are you doing?" He would then have a student stand and say, "I am standing up." Then the class repeated, "I am standing up," followed by "I am sitting down," etc. All responses, collectively and individually, were in complete sentences and all pupils participated. Later they took sticks and went around the room acting out sentences spoken by the teacher, such as: "I am sweeping it [the floor]," "take a knife," "Cut the grass," "sweep it," "collect it," and "throw it away."

Allan had the children act according to his commands and they changed tenses when speaking about the actions, e.g., present, past, future. All then returned to their places in front of him. Allan said this was an example of a lesson that provided various kinds of pupil activities, including physical movement. It also showed appropriate use of syllabus and the textbook.

Fourth Class. The lesson began by having the children repeat sentences that Edwin had written on the board, using tense changes.

"I'll come in and sit down. I came in and sat down."

"I'm picking up a ruler. I picked up a ruler."

"I'm throwing it out the window. I threw it out the window."

"He's—she's—we—they—"

"I'm lying on the floor. I lay on the floor."

The teacher had the children, individually and in unison, act out the sentences as they repeated each one. He was careful to correct pronunciation. He moved the children about to illustrate singular and plural. As he pointed out various situations, the class had to decide whether the sentence response should be singular or plural. Edwin said this was an example of the teacher promoting thought. He cleverly ended the lesson with the sentence, "I'm going out," repeated by each student and soon the entire class was outside the room at the moment recess began.

After recess Edwin conducted a verb drill that involved the students in physical activities. He presented the drill, then as the children repeated after him, he directed them to perform the behavior. He also routinely changed the drill items. Examples were:

"Raise your hand and scratch your head."

"Open your mouth and say 'ah'."

"Pinch yourself and look at a picture."

"Strike a match and light a fire."

"Drink some tea and sit down."

"Touch a friend and stand up."

Edwin concluded the verb drill by saying, "point to the teacher and then point to Mr. Stone."

Third Class. The teacher rearranged the pupils so that half were on each side of an aisle down the middle, all seated at their desks with paper, pencils and rulers. The teacher was

writing on the board and the children were copying. John had written:

1. There _____ _____ dust on the floor.
2. There _____ on the board.
3. Everyday I _____ well.
4. She can _____ from one to five.
5. My friend _____ well.
6. We can _____ our desks.

Off to the side of these six sentences were these words:

walls dust count measure

is much is not much write writes

The children were told to copy the sentences and insert the correct missing words from the list. The teacher began by doing one example for the class. He then instructed them to proceed, and when finished, to draw a line with their rulers and put their pencils down.

The observer circulated, as did the teacher. For some reason, this disrupted the class. Then Allan, in his role as principal, came in to get several pupils, causing additional disruption. The observer noted wide variation in the children's ability to follow the teacher's directions and the time required to copy the sentences. A number were unable to copy them correctly from the board. The pupils became increasingly restless, as more of them realized they were unable to do the assigned task. Sensing that he was losing the class, John suddenly ended the lesson and called the pupils to come up front and sit on the floor and perform different actions. While they were performing these, the class asked questions like: "Are you sweeping?" to a child who was obviously sweeping. While some of the children were asking these questions, the rest of them were not involved and were putting their books away. John carried on even though he did not have the attention of half the class. To prevent further embarrassment, the observer left.

Some Generalization about Oral English Instruction. In general, teacher presentations seemed too long, those of pupils, too short. Perhaps the teachers should have restricted themselves to fewer sentences and encouraged pupils to make up different sentences on their own using the same grammatical structure. The pupils then could make up their own sentences in response to situations constructed by the teacher. In many instances, teachers themselves apparently presented all the sentences they wanted the class to utter. The class then pronounced the same sentences that the teacher had presented. The teachers often used the same situations for their presentations as they did for class practice. Different situations might have encouraged pupils to make up sentences previously unheard in the teacher's presentation. Clearly, the teachers were not following the

principles of the Tate system. In the Tate system, changing the situations causes students to switch from expressing an idea one way to doing one another way, and to increase ability to switch ways of expressing thought that leads to fluency in language and to increa l cognitive development.

In terms of teacher-talk, there was a trend toward somewhat less teacher-talk the second year, as compared with the baseline evaluation.[2] This was in tune with the SPC-sponsored staff development effort that emphasized less teacher "work," more pupil activity and increased use of SPC materials.[3] In the baseline evaluation, teachers said they engaged in teacher-talk "very often" but that now they thought they were talking "much less" (Shlomo, 1984).

Generally, after oral practice, teachers had the children write sentences. The teachers, however, usually stayed at the front of the class, seldom circulating among the pupils or checking on work done or asking individuals what they were going to write. This questioning would have required the children to have a sentence in mind before committing it to paper.

THE TEACHING OF READING

Teachers said reading instruction was a problem because about half of any one class did not read well. Typically, they divided their classes in half and gave a silent reading assignment to the better group while the teachers worked with the slower one. They asked individual students to read aloud and corrected them, especially their mispronounced words. Some passages were read in unison, but usually teachers called on individuals. They kept a list of the words each pupil mispronounced and the next time that pupil read, the teacher particularly checked the words each had mispronounced. Once a week, the better readers read stories either silently or aloud, using their reader or a supplementary book supplied by the SPC. Also, once a week, classes worked as a whole and all read together. Teachers often read stories aloud to their classes.

Teachers said they were satisfied with the progress of their better groups, but not the slower ones, and were at a loss to know how to improve their reading instruction. The evaluator's observations verified these comments, particularly in classes 4-6 where instruction was a combination of sentences read by teachers and individual students, reading in unison, and teacher's reading stories. Teachers often interrupted their oral reading to expand on the plot, explain it, or interpret the characters in the story.

SECTION 2. READING AND LISTENING ACHIEVEMENT

The Gap Reading Comprehension Test[4] was administered to the sixth class. The chronological age (CA) of the 27 pupils (19 boys, 8 girls) ranged from 11 to 14; reading age (RA), from 4.7 to 9.11. The mean CA was 12.3; RA, 8.3; thus, reading age was 4.0 years behind students' chronological age. During the same week in June of the baseline year when the Gap Test was administered, only two pupils achieved <u>any</u> reading age. Their mean reading age was only 4; chronological age, 12.3. By comparison,

in second year's testing, while CA remained the same (12.3), RA (8.3) increased significantly (P>.05), with all 27 pupils obtaining a scorable reading age. Further testing with the Gap Test is needed before the educational significance of this year's results will be known. Is the dramatic gain between years a fluke or a fact? Is it the result of test familiarity and practice with similar test items (as the evaluators suspect), better teaching, or some combination of these elements? These are questions to be kept in mind in weighing the Gap results; also it should be noted that the Gap, as a standard of reading achievement, was designed for, and normed on, children whose only language is English. To use the Gap Test as a measure of achievement, thus, is unfair and invalid.

The Micronesian Achievement Test Series (MATS) in Reading and Listening Comprehension was administered to classes 3-6. The tests were scored in the U.S. by the Educational Testing Service. The results are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Reported in Table 1 are raw score means where 50 is a perfect score. In reading, the highest mean score was achieved by class 5 (43.3), closely followed by classes 4 and 6 (36.4). In listening, the highest mean score was achieved by class 4 (29.4), closely followed by 5 (25.8) and 3 (23.0). ETS had no reading raw scored mean norms for either reading or listening, so the primary basis of comparison of the reported scores was the baseline evaluation, (Stone, 1980).

The baseline year means in reading were:

Class 3 - 30.3, with a range of 3-42

4 - 33.6, with a range of 23-35

5 - 26.5, with a range of 0-46

6 - 33.5, with a range of 12-33

Comparing the reading scores of the two years showed that class 3 declined slightly (30.3 to 29.2); class 4 improved slightly (33.6 to 38.9); class 5 improved significantly (26.5 to 43.3); and class 6 improved a little (33.5 to 36.4). The only shift of importance is the marked gain by class 5. Again, like the sixth class gain in the Gap Test, the evaluators are not sure why this occurred. Repeated testing over time may provide the clue.

The baseline means in listening were:

Class 3 - 23.9, with a range of 13-28

4 - 28.1, with a range of 23-35

5 - 23.9, with a range of 2-31

6 - No test was available for Class 6.

Comparing the listening scores of the two years shows that class 3 decreased slightly (23.9 to 23.0), classes 4 and 5 increased slightly (28.1 to 29.4 and 23.9 to 25.8, respectively). In our discussions of MATS with Educational Testing Service personnel, who developed MATS, we agreed that an appropriate comparison for the Mele-Maat children would be with one of the subsamples in Micronesia that was used by the ETS to norm the test. The most appropriate group was the Trust Territory minus the Northern Marianas (TT-A). The TT-A standard score was valuable because comparisons could be made across reading/listening levels and classes. The TT-A and Mele-Maat MATS Reading and Listening means are shown in Table 2.

The standard score means in Table 2 agree with the findings from the analysis of raw scores in Table 1:

1. Listening achievement is generally higher than reading.

2. Mele-Maat pupils scored significantly above the TT-A mean in both listening and reading at all levels and in all classes.

Using mean percentile rank scores in reading and listening on MATS, the Mele-Maat pupils again scored higher in listening (88.9) than in reading (78.6) and the average of the two tests was at the 83.7 percentile. This is a notable achievement and demonstrates how well Mele-Maat pupils are doing in comparison with comparable South Pacific island second language learners. The class 4 ranking of 92.8 in listening argues well for future achievement in reading as well as other language arts skills.

SECTION 3. PUPIL AND TEACHER WRITING COMPETENCE

The results of the Dolch vocabulary analysis, University of California, Berkeley, Bay Area Writing Project staff assessment of pupils' written work, and two independent analyses of teacher-written stories are reported in this section, together with comparisons of pupil and teacher writing ability with the baseline year.

Vocabulary Analysis of Pupils. The extent and character of the vocabulary of 4, 5, 6 class pupils was analyzed with the aid of a computer. The analysis was based on Dolch's concept that a student's known vocabulary consists of a set number of words (Dolch, 1955). The student vocabulary was secured from their writing samples by means of questionnaire items about the best and least liked aspects of school, favorite sports, and the like. The questionnaire strategy was selected because of difficulties found in attempts to secure free-response written samples in the baseline evaluation.

The average overall total words used by pupils was 3,618; the average number of different words, 441. The fifth class girls had the most extensive vocabulary (8,287) words) and used the largest number of different words (717), followed by the sixth class boys (4,700 and 535 respectively). Girls also had the most extensive vocabularies in class 4 (2,348 vs. 1,809 for class 4 boys). With the exception of the fifth class girls and

Table 1. Summary of MATS Reading and Listening Comprehension Scores: Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Ages; by Classes.

Reading Comprehension						Listening Comprehension					Chronological Age	
Class	N	Level	Mean	SD	Range	N	Level	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	Range
3	30	1	29.2	12.3	8-45	28	1	23.0	3.4	15-28	9.2	7.7-12.1
4	32	2	38.9	12.1	4-50	32	2	29.4	2.4	22-34	9.5	8.6-12.3
5	25	3	43.3	8.9	9-50	24	3	25.8	4.4	9-32	11.0	9.6-13.9
6	27	4	36.4	7.2	24-48	No Listening Test available for Class 6					12.3	10.5-14.5

Table 2. TT-A and Male-Most Mean Standard Scores for MATS in Reading/Listening, by Levels and Classes.

	TT-A Standard Scores		Male-Most Pupil Scores		
	Mean	SD	Mean	Range	SD
MATS Reading Level I					
Class 3	202.5	31.1	226.6	166-289	33.4
Class 4	225.3	29.6	-	-	-
MATS Reading Level II					
Class 4	225.2	28.1	264.3	181-304	23.0
Class 5	241.0	29.5	-	-	-
MATS Reading Level III					
Class 5	241.2	29.4	280.2	221-320	19.8
MATS Reading Level IV					
Class 6	249.9	25.9	* -	* -	* -
MATS Listening Level I					
Class 3	224.2	24.3	256.6	225-282	14.4
Class 4	236.3	24.9	-	-	-
MATS Listening Level II					
Class 4	236.6	23.6	275.1	250-300	9.6
Class 5	244.4	24.8	-	-	-
MATS Listening Level III					
Class 5	244.3	23.0	274.6	212-296	15.0
Class 6	250.1	25.1	-	-	-

* There are no scaled scores or interpretive data available at this time for the Level IV Reading Test.

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sixth class boys, the vocabulary addition from classes 4 to 6 was modest (boys 1,809-1,963, girls 2,348-2,599). In range of common words used (not counting proper nouns), again the fifth class girls were the most verbal using 665 different words vs. sixth class boys with 321.

The use of certain familiar words ranged widely from a low of 8 times for "family" by boys in class 4 to a high of 79 for "school" by girls of class 5. Less common words such as "environment," "science," "punctuation," "storekeeper," "president," "revision," and "plantation," appeared singly at one or more class levels. The vocabulary list also included some proper names of families, friends, teachers, and places (Mele-Maat, Vila, Australia).

The University of California, Berkeley, Bay Area Writing Project language specialists assessed samples of Mele-Maat students' written work. Using that assessment and the Dolch vocabulary analysis, the evaluation team concluded that:

1. There was little vocabulary growth from classes 4 to 6.

2. The topics that children wrote about and, indeed, how they wrote, were similar at the three grade levels. Undoubtedly this uniformity was related to their unique Polynesian lifestyle.

3. Syntax was simple with little or no embedding. Sentences generally consisted of subject-verb-object, or subject-verb-prepositional phrase modifying the verb, or just subject-verb.

4. There was little variety in sentence patterns. The uniformity was a reflection of the limited patterns the pupils have been exposed to by their teachers.

5. Handwriting was clear and precise and, remarkably, there were few spelling errors.

6. Generally, the students' writing reflected confusion with respect to tense (present and past only were used, often mixed) and with respect to subject-verb agreement and subject-pronoun agreement. These are the usual errors found in ESL the world over, and are typical of American children for whom English is their first (and only) language![5]

7. The writing samples were based on having the children respond to a set of questions, which may have limited their responses. But, the alternative of obtaining free samples as in the baseline evaluation was even more limited--the children were shy and obviously felt so intimidated they wouldn't (or couldn't) respond freely.

Comparing pupil writing ability over the two-year period, the conclusions of the baseline report also apply to the second year:

> On the whole . . .the writing showed . . .difficulty with English verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and the use of singular-plural distinctions . . . Vocabulary . . .was quite restricted: fishing, gardening, a few school matters, the family, and help around the house, were subjects . . .

Writing Samples of Teachers. The teachers were asked to write a short story or a fable they had been told as children or one they told their own children. They responded enthusiastically and met together to discuss what each was planning to do so there would by no repetition in the fables chosen. University of California, Berkeley, language specialists prepared an analysis of these six written works. The same samples also were analyzed using the Parea Scribal Fluency Rating Scale.[6] The results follow.

Selwyn (the Sixth Class Teacher). The writing suggested clearly he was a bilingual, non-native English speaker. The writing was strong and suggested that through the fluency he possessed in his native language, he was able to translate in an indirect mode; i.e., the characters in the story remained the same in either language. There were no grammatical errors and no misspelled words. He also demonstrated an ability to use direct and indirect quotes. On the Scribal Fluency Rating Scale, with a possible score of 1-5 and 5 as the highest rating, the two readers independently rated Selwyn's writing proficiency as 4.5-5.

Allen (the Fifth Class Teacher). Like Selwyn, the writing suggested he too was a bilingual, non-native English speaker. The writing flowed naturally and there were clear connections between sentences and paragraphs. His chief difficulty was grammar. The verbs "shorten," "burn," and "hunt" were used in the present tense while the story was written in past tense. "To get dry" was written instead of "to dry," burnt" was used when "burned" was correct. "On to the field" was used in several places instead of simply "on the field." "On the flame" was used instead of "on fire." He did not set off quotes correctly. Spelling was perfect, however, and handwriting very readable. The story was interesting and dramatic. On the average, his fluency rating was 3.5-4.

Edwin (the Fourth Class Teacher). Technically, he also was a bilingual, non-native English speaker. The writing was natural and flowing. The sentences were well written and maintained the character of a very interesting folktale. Edwin obviously was an excellent storyteller. The reader could almost hear Edwin's deep baritone voice on the page. He used direct and indirect quotes properly. Spelling was precise, handwriting clear and legible. His writing proficiency rating was 4.5-5.

John (the Third Class Teacher). He was "limited English proficient." The direct translation was carried out with basic English and, therefore, lost basic character. The coherence was weak throughout the writing of an amusing folktale. There were three grammatical errors in a single page of good clear handwriting, i.e., "dried" was used instead of "dry," "a low tide" and "a high tide" instead of simply "low tide," and "high tide." Quotes were properly punctuated and all spelling was correct except for

the one word "heigh" instead of high." John's proficiency rating was 2.5-3.

. Asel (the Second Class Teacher). She was limited English proficient. The structure of the story was weak. The pattern used in writing was basic and quite inadequate. She used direct translation of native language with non-standard English. She thought in her native tongue much faster than she was able to in English. She constantly mixed present and past tenses, in the same sentence as well as in the same paragraph, but she used direct and indirect quotes correctly. Spelling and handwriting, however, were very good and the story she wrote was quite clever. Her writing proficiency rating was 1.5-2.

Tonas (the First Class Teacher). She was limited English proficient. The coherence of the story was weak. She was unable to write in English what she was thinking in her own native language. Her control of tense in a very dramatic folktale was inconsistent. She used a number of run-on sentences. Handwriting and spelling, however, were excellent. Her scribal proficiency rating was 2.5-3.

Comparing teacher writing samples over the 2-year study, again, the same conclusions are warranted ("Teachers generally fluent . . . but with some tense and verb agreement errors, with class 5 and 6 teachers the best writers"). From this year's data, Edwin should be added to the best writer group. Indeed, he may be the best.

SECTION 4. PUPIL AND TEACHER ORAL COMPETENCE

As was done in the baseline year, oral samples of pupil and teacher formal and informal conversations were recorded on audiotapes and analyzed by the University of California, Berkeley, oral language experts in the PEFL project,[7] using the Harding Oral Test Profile. The average ratings of pupils and teachers are shown in Table 3.

Using a 1-5 scale with 5 high and 1 low, the pupils' mean score was 3 (average) in overall competence. The children were rated highest in willingness and punctuation/intonation; average to low in fluent/hesitation. This repeats the findings of the baseline evaluation.

The oral work of the six teachers (Table 3) showed an overall average profile of 4 (midway between high and average) with willingness and fluent strongest and vocabulary range and vocabulary accuracy the weakest. As shown by Table 4, Selwyn's profile is strongest, followed by Tonas, Allan's, Edwin's, Asel's and John's. This profile closely resembles that of the baseline year, except that Allan ranked ahead of Tonas; otherwise, the profiles show no change from year to year.

Table 3

Average Rating of Teacher and Pupil Oral English Using the Harding Scale

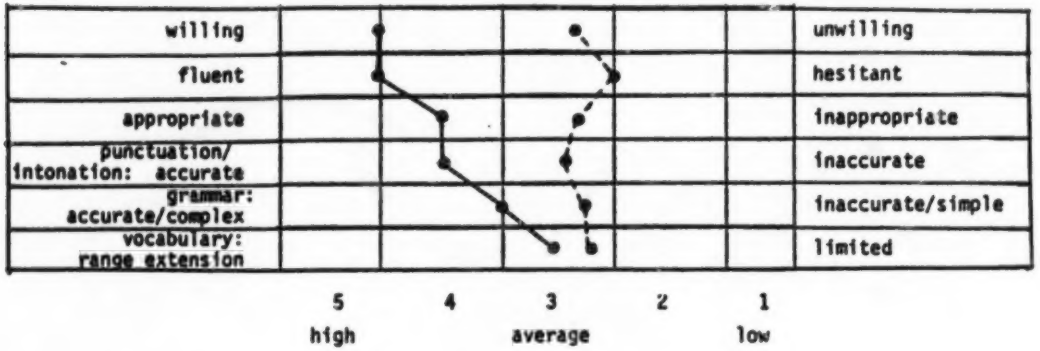
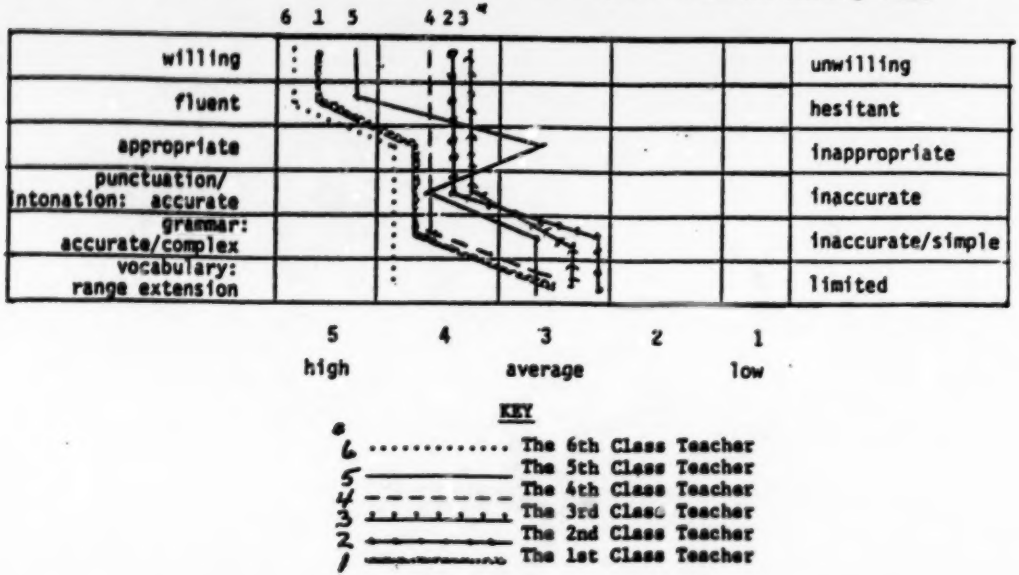


Table 4

Average Rating of Each Teacher's Oral English Using the Harding Scale



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The result of combining consensus teacher profile ratings were:

willingness	average to high
fluent	average to high
appropriate	high
punctuation	average
vocabulary accurate	average
vocabulary range	average minus

The consensus ratings in the baseline year were the same for willingness and appropriate but were lower in each of the other four qualities. This would be a reason to celebrate because the teachers changed in the direction of improvement in these four language characteristics. Actually, the evaluation team does not believe this was true. Their ears caught no improvement in teacher oral communication skills over the baseline year. They were much easier to talk to but this was because we knew them better and they trusted us more. The difference in the Harding profiles is attributed to the use of the PEFL specialists. This year's group rated the tapes they listened to higher than those of the previous year. The two who had rated both years saw no difference. As was true in the baseline evaluation, teachers were stronger in willingness, fluency, and appropriateness in oral competence; and ranked lower in punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary.

The same was true of pupils, generally. Typically both teachers and pupils continued to cut short their pronunciations, thus tending to render their output monosyllabic. On the whole teachers' oral expression was remarkably understandable. This was somewhat less true of pupils. Both made common grammatical mistakes, the same ones noted in their written work.

On the playground and at recess times, the teachers and children spoke in their native tongues. In our presence, the teachers usually conversed in Bislamar. This was a change from the baseline year when they had been careful to speak in English. Undoubtedly, they used Bislamar because they felt more comfortable with us than at the time of the baseline study.

SECTION 5. PUPIL ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR

On the basis of this second year evaluation, the research team can add little to what was said in the baseline report about the pupils. They were delightful youngsters--happy, friendly, responsive, motivated to learn, and satisfied with the Polynesian life-style of their island culture. By Western standards they are poor but clean. At least in our presence, they were shy and reticent. They presented a delightful innocence and naivete.

Because the team had found informal conversation with the children difficult in the baseline year, the team opted to use a questionnaire that provided samples of written work as well as

data on behavior. The questionnaire asked the children about their family, school, favorite sports, best and worst aspects of school, what they did on Sundays, and what they wanted to be when they grew up.

Questionnaires. What stands out most in the analysis of the questionnaires is that slightly more than half the pupils (58%) were unable to answer the questions in the manner the evaluators expected or intended. This was particularly true of questions about the children's families. Some left those questions blank, others described activities the family did together or told how they lived rather than the size and make-up of their family. Two-thirds of the families lived in Mele, the other third in Maat; the average number of children per family was 3.6.

Tola, a fourth-class boy wrote:

> My friend is always good. He is never naughty because he is my friend. He likes to play with me. He is always good and well. He is never naughty and sick. He is always clean and well. He is never dirty and sick. He is always a good boy in the village.

Touleak, a fifth class girl wrote:

> My friends always good at home. Sometimes my friends cut wood for my mother and father. Sometimes they go to the sea and look for fish to eat. Sometimes my friends cut the grass for my cows to eat. Sometimes my friends go to the sea and swimming. Sometimes they go to the Bila to buy some things to eat and some meat for mother and father to eat and eggs for mother.

Kalmarakes, a sixth class boy wrote:

> My best friend is Ben because he have to play with me every days. I and he sometimes going fishing. He has a bicycle and we always rides on the bicycle. We and my father sometimes goes to Cinema. We sometimes go to our garden and cut a new gourd with my uncle's help.

After school chores typically mentioned included: cutting firewood, carrying water, sweeping the floors/cleaning the house, washing clothes/dishes, working in the garden, and helping grandmothers and grandfathers.

Allison, a sixth class girl wrote:

> When I go home from my school, I always help my Mother at home and I always go to the garden. Before I go out from my class room in the afternoon I must sweep my class room. And after that I will go home and wash my uniform. The next day I will go and cut the firewood. The next day I will pick up my rubbish and clean my house every afternoon.

Tapanga, a sixth-class boy wrote:

> I want to work first then I can make a house for myself. I want to drive a car when I grow up. I want to have a lot of money when I grow up. If I have a lot of money, I will go to NOUMEA.

Fahkiva, a fifth class girl wrote:

> I want to be a good girl when I grow up. I want to be kind to all my friends. I want to be polite to my parents. I want to be kind to my little brothers and sisters. I want to be let my hair grow long.

Merelin, another fifth class girl added:

> When I grow up, I want to be a teacher. I'll go to the other islands. I'm going to learn people know more. I want to travel a car and I want work in Port Vila. I want to known how to learn to travel. Thank you for giving this paper to me I was very happy that you came here.

A number of children, chosen at random on the playground, were asked some of the same items posed in the written questionnaire. Typically. they said they spent their Sundays "going to church, going swimming, eating, then going back to church." This response of pupils was almost unanimous. Their favorite games were:

> Football (soccer), volleyball, basketball, running, jumping, fishing, "singing and smiling," playing games with brothers and sisters; "talking and laughing together;" and swimming in the river and ocean. There was little difference in favorite games played between boys and girls or between 4, 5 and 6 class children.

What they liked best about school were:

> English and math, specified by approximately 90 percent of the 4, 5 and 6 class children. They were about equally divided between their preference for the two subject fields. The others mentioned P.E., reading, environmental study, religious instruction, and arts and crafts. The overwhelming interest in English and math substantiates the intent of immersion programs to focus on content to be learned rather than on language <u>per se</u>.

Least liked about school were:

> Various kinds of anti-social behavior, expressed as "bad friends," "children making lots of noise," "fighting," "cross friends," "pupils who steal things at school." Such items were followed by the teaching of current affairs and handwriting.

<u>Illustrating Mini-Case Studies:</u> <u>Tounsama</u> is a thin, tall sixth class girl, age 12, who lives in the village of Mele with her father, mother, a brother and a younger sister. She said, "we are always smile to each other." About her family, on the

student questionnaire, she wrote: "Sometimes my family goes to the village garden and Sometimes they stay home. They were always happy. The work my family always do every morning is to boil the tea and go to the store for the bread and we all drink the tea with the bread."

In school Tounsama likes English, math, environmental study and health. She dislikes current affairs. On the Gap Test, she had an RA of 8.11, putting her 3.1 years behind her CA. On MATS Reading Level IV, she scored 42 of 50; on Listening 47 of 50. She has problems with verb tense (for example, go, goes, going, and singular and plural nouns). Her written work contains a number of run-on sentences, but on the whole, she communicates her ideas rather clearly and expressively both orally and in writing. She wrote that after school, "I always helps my mother and my father. If my father tells me to sweep the floor I must sweep the floor if I didn't want to sweep the floor my father will say your a bad girl."

Tounsama's favorite games are basketball and volleyball which, like many of the other children, she calls "netball." In the interview, we asked her, "what do you do on Sunday?" She responded:

> I go to the church and hear the pastor telling the children the stories of Jesus. After Church I were home and have my dinner and after dinner I go to the shade of a tree and rest for a while and I go the river to swim.

When she grows up she wants to be a nurse.

Anthony, age 11 in class 5, resides in Mele with his father, mother, a brother and two sisters. He is a light-skinned handsome boy with a winning smile but he was very shy and reticent in our interviews. He did, however, volunteer to escort the interviewer to the village of Mele when word of an emergency long distance telephone call was passed along. Anthony proudly pointed out the building where the Village Council met and introduced the interviewer to the woman in charge of the village telephone. Later, he escorted the interviewer back to the school.

Anthony wrote that he had six friends and that:

> I and my friends go and fish in the sea. When we came back we started plying mabolls and went we finish plying mabolls we kick the football we go to the garden and help our father and mother to work.

On the MATS Level III, he scored 46 of 50 in Reading and 48 of 50 in Listening. His best liked school subjects were math, English, and health.

Anthony's favorite games were football, volleyball, and "plying mabolls with my friends."

On his questionnaire about what he did on Sundays, Anthony wrote:

I go to the Church and the story about Jises and the dicabolls. When we finish telling the story we go home and eat our food. When we finish eating our food we go to the sea and swome and come back.

What Anthony doesn't like about school is "fighting, hitting, and bad words." When he grows up, he wants to go to "Austrerelia" and "work for the white mens and stay there forever." Anthony is a bright, personable lad who has problems translating his phonetic understanding of words into standard English.

SECTION 6. TEACHER ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR

The teachers made positive comments about the staff development work they had taken the past year from the SPC's English Language Consultant. When asked about future staff development needs, they expressed a strong desire to visit other schools and observe other teachers. Selwyn, Allan, and John reported they had taken an English course on their own, in Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, that had been given by the Extension Center of the University of the South Pacific. Asked what motivated this interest in self-improvement, Allan said, "so the school will look good in your study."

All six said they regularly listen to the radio in English, five listen to both English and Bislamar broadcasts.

All six said they regularly read newspapers, one in English only, the other five in both English and Bislamar. The evaluation team had no way of verifying these comments. They may be true and if so, reflect a genuine interest in the English language and the importance of their staying "current" in it. On the other hand, they may have said this because they thought we wanted them to. Responses to inquiries about how much time the teachers regularly spent preparing the next day's lessons were as definitive and unverifiable as those about their listening and reading habits. Five said they spent 2+ hours per day. Tonas said, "being a teacher and a housewife is another problem."

Teachers remarked favorably about the increased number of textbooks, supplementary books, and supplies, provided by the SPC this year over the baseline year. Selwyn was pleased with the new desks in his room. Asel and Tonas had puzzles to use with the children for the first time and they talked about the charts they had made or were making. There had been little evidence of charts in the baseline evaluation.

Teachers stated that there were few, if any, discipline problems and that school attendance was steady. This same observation was noted the previous year. Mele-Maat pupils were enthusiastic and responsive and only lost interest and attention when teachers carried on passive learning activities ad infinitum, as all were wont to do at times.

What was most clearly different the second year from the baseline year was that the teachers were very conscious of the significance of what they were doing and its possible importance. They were eager for more staff development and specific about

what they wanted. They were aware of being "watched" and this gave them a renewed zest and zeal for teaching. They were more self-confident and had grown in independence. They spoke often about telling other teachers what they were doing at professional meetings. Several planned to take an active part in teachers' organizations. Each year more Mele-Maat students have been qualifying for secondary school admission. Accomplishments like this, together with the Hawthorne Effect of the two-year evaluation, provided a spark for better teaching and greater enthusiasm. This year, the faculty hosted a daily midmorning tea in the teacher's room (an abandoned classroom). They took turns providing the tea and "sweets" and urged us to join them and we gladly did. Here was a rare opportunity to hear their comments about the school, the SPC, the children, and the evaluation. Since they felt more at ease this year, they expressed themselves more freely. Our mechanical and technical difficulties in videotaping their teaching except for the last day when each teacher was taped for five minutes was a disappointment they referred to often. "Better luck next time," they said.

Whole-class, teacher-dominated instruction continued to be the modal pattern. Despite change since the baseline year, the teachers are not skillful at making the students more central in their instructional activities. Options the teachers did not often engage in are:

1. Having pupils more active, rather than so passive.

2. Making the goals of learning clearer and more explicit to pupils.

3. More often reinforcing the expected learning responses.

4. Providing substantial feedback and evaluation to pupils.

5. Recognizing that pupils differ in rate of learning, from one time to another, and from task to task.

Despite these conceptual and methodological limitations, changes in teacher repertoire and resources have been documented and gains in pupil learning have been achieved. But what has been the catalyst? How much change and improvement were the result of the SPC's staff development effort and how much derived from the Hawthorne Effect?

SECTION 7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this second year's evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the teaching of English and of subject matter instruction in English as a second language in the Mele-Maat School. In addition to the English issue, for comparison purposes, instruction in all other subject fields also was observed. Other questions investigated included pupil reading and listening achievement; pupil and teacher written and oral competence; school climate and the attitude of pupils and teachers; and changes since the baseline evaluation the previous year. Methods of assessment included reports and records; tests; questionnaires; interviews; observations; informal conversations;

recorded samples of oral and written work; and videotapes. The overall finding was that there was increased effectiveness in teaching and learning.

A précis of six specific findings follows:

1. Re: The Teaching of English and English as the Medium of Instruction.

Some positive effects have occurred since the baseline evaluation, to wit:

> Oral English lessons were more carefully prepared than in the baseline year, there was greater variation in the number and kind of pupil activities provided, there was more physical pupil movement, including role-playing and simulation, there was better pacing and more on-task, targeted instruction, there was less domination by teacher-talk and rote-unison pupil responses, there was increased use of visual aids, more efforts to group pupils for special purposes, more direct eye-contact between teachers and pupils, and more oral responses from pupils in sentences rather than in words and phrases.

Reading writing, and other teaching that was observed documented the continued emphasis on teacher activity and pupil passivity.

2. Re: Reading and Listening Achievement.

On the Gap Reading Comprehension Test, the sixth class, which averaged 12.3 in chronological age, achieved a mean reading age of 8.3. In the baseline year, the only two pupils who scored a reading age discernible on this test achieved an age of only 7. Hence, there was a dramatic gain in reading scores in the two-year period, using as the standard, an instrument designed for children whose only language is English.

In reading comprehension on the MATS, a test normed on South Pacific populations, all Mele-Maat students scored above the test norms. Reading scores were slightly lower than listening but both achieved a mean percentile rank in the middle 80's. Considering the hierarchy of skills, from listening to speaking to reading to writing, the improvement in listening holds promise for subsequent improvement in the other three skills. Reading achievement, by classes, was approximately the same as the baseline year, except for class 5. Here the scores improved significantly ($P>.05$), from a mean of 26.5 to 43.3. Class 4 achieved the highest score in Listening Comprehension with a mean of 29.4. Thus, Mele-Maat pupils demonstrated marked improvement in standardized test scores.

3. Re: Pupil and Teacher Writing Competence.

The average vocabulary of 4, 5, 6 classes was 3,168 words, the overall average number of different words was 441 with the girls of class 5 topping the other classes with a total of 8,287 and an average of 717 different words. Writing samples of pupils showed no change from the baseline year. As might be expected

given their unique lifestyle, again, what the children wrote about and how they wrote were Polynesian-based and remarkably similar. Syntax showed little or no embedding. Growth in vocabulary from year to year was restricted. Writing reflected confusion of tense forms and subject-verb agreement problems. Handwriting, however, was clear, readable, and precise; and spelling was excellent.

While the six teachers spoke several languages, three of them were technically bilingual because the syntax in their written work was like that of non-native English speakers. The written fables of all six teachers were interesting and generally well written. Writing samples showed no change from the baseline year except Edwin who emerged as a very creative writer with a high degree of control over standard written English.

4. Re: Pupil and Teacher Oral Competence.

Pupil and teacher oral competence was assessed by language experts and analyzed by using the Harding Oral Test Profile. Teachers rated average to high, pupils low to average. Both were stronger in willingness, fluency/hesitation, and appropriateness, and lower in punctuation/intonation accuracy, grammar accuracy, and vocabulary extension. Both teachers and pupils short-cut their pronunciation. On the whole, however, both were understandable--more so the teachers than the pupils, although the latter may be cause by the children's natural reticence and shyness when the evaluators were present. Both teachers and pupils made the same grammatical errors in speaking that were present in their writing. These findings generally repeat those of the baseline evaluation.

5. Re: Pupil Attitude and Behavior.

This second year evaluation confirmed the baseline finding that the Mele-Maat pupils were friendly, happy, motivated,[8] and somewhat shy by American standards.

Pupils in classes 4, 5 ,6 responded to a questionnaire that was used to gain information about their behavior as well as to sample their writing ability. The questionnaire asked about their family, school, favorite sports, best-liked and least-liked aspects of school, what they did on Sundays, and what they wanted to be when they grew up.

Random interviews with children on the playground were another source of information on these same topics. The most revealing questionnaire finding was that over half the pupils did not answer many of the questions, perhaps because of reticence, or because of the evaluators' inability to put the questions in ways the pupils clearly understood. The pupils reported an average of 3.6 brothers and sisters, agreed that their favorite sports were playing games with friends, running, jumping, walking, fishing, and singing. After school they said they typically did chores at home and went to "the Church" on Sundays. Their favorite games were soccer and volleyball; best liked school subjects, English and math; and least liked, various forms of anti-social behavior such as "bad friends" and "children making

lots of noise." When they grew up, they wanted to be teachers, gardeners, nurses, and airplane pilots.

Case studies of the same children as in the baseline year provided interesting anecdotal material to round out the questionnaire and interview findings. With one exception, test scores of the case study children showed them to be among the better achieving students in their classes with scores of 45 or better out of a possible 50 on MATS in reading and listening.

6. Re: Teacher Attitude and Behavior.

In comparison with the baseline year, teachers revealed the beginning of individualization and grouping for instruction and greater sensitivity to the special needs of pupils.[9] The typical pattern of instruction was whole-class teaching. Teachers read stories to their pupils and told them stories. In all instruction observed across the curriculum, most of the "work" was done by teachers as they talked at the blackboard and as pupils sat passively at their desks. There was little evidence of teachers moving around the room noting how pupils were responding or assisting their individual efforts. Reading instruction involved a single method, even though the class was divided into different ability groups. All were taught the same lesson, only at different times.

On the whole, however, pupils were attentive, classroom and school climate very positive with few, if any, discipline or attendance problems. The evaluators saw more attempts by teachers to modify learning activities within short time-spans in order to maintain pupil interest and attention than were observed in the baseline study.

All teachers commented favorably on what they had learned in staff development, and how they were using it in their teaching. They were definite about what staff development they still needed. All said they regularly listened to the radio and read newspapers, mostly in English and Bislamar. Routinely, they said they spent 2+ hours per day on their own time preparing lessons for the next day's teaching. Three teachers completed a course in English which they took in order to enhance their teaching and the school's image in this evaluation.

Evaluating the Evaluation. Using the age-old criteria of validity and reliability to examine this study, how accurate are the findings? Recall that the evaluators were a white-skinned, US/Australian team from two large, prosperous, well-known countries, who "descended" on brown skinned, "disadvantaged" Polynesians living in an isolated, underdeveloped, island country. Worse yet, the evaluators arrived in the threatening posture of examining and valuing! Did their presence change what transpired? Obviously, like pollutants, we contaminated the environment. We were aware of that problem and were particularly sensitive to teaching performed just for our benefit. Nevertheless, we have never seen teachers who worked so hard. We observed good and poor teaching and much in between. Despite our presence and no matter how they tried, the teachers couldn't be any different from what they were, or teach in ways other than their own. We went out of our way to be friendly, casual,

informal, low-keyed, unobtrusive. Teachers and pupils responded in friendly fashion with openness--smiling, laughing, singing. The teachers had morning teas at school which we attended and they invited us to their homes to visit, and on one occasion, to a wedding and to Sunday supper. On our last day, they organized an all-school singing assembly that touched our hearts and made us feel they had enjoyed our company and were glad we'd come.

How reliable are the findings? The evaluators used triangulation (three "points" from which to measure, Denizen, 1978). Thus, the evaluators used 3 or more data sources, inquiry techniques, number and kind of instruments, time and place of observations; and in assessing pupil and teacher oral and written works. Audio and video tapes of pupil and teacher conversations and of our classroom observations were appraised independently by groups of experts. The results obtained the first year were corroborated by findings of the second year.

Six months after the extensive report of this second year study was published by the SPC, (Stone, 1982), we spent a sabbatical year visiting the nations of the South Pacific, discussing the published report and its significance with educators and government officials. Where we met with naturalistic language adherents, our work received high marks; with structuralist, a "yes, that's all very well, but . . ." response.

Given the preconditions of the study, the limitations of budget and time, what more might we have done or done differently? We had expected to continue the study for another 3 years and to add comparison schools. But political changes in Vanuatu, from being the New Hebrides, a British/French dependency, to the independent status that was achieved between the first and second evaluation, changed all that. The citizens of Vanuatu not only wanted to have their own government, they also wanted to govern their own schools. So they "encouraged" the British educators and the SPC to leave and elected to capitalize on what had been accomplished at Mele-Maat by appointing Selwyn the principal of another school, naming Edwin the principal of Mele-Maat, and sending Allan to Australia for further training.

We might have visited the school more frequently during the year and for shorter periods of time, but the sheer logistics and vastness of the South Pacific precluded that. We did consult frequently with British officials in the Vanuatu Ministry of Education, the staff of Malapoa Teachers College who were familiar with Mele-Maat, and we shared our findings with Vanuatu's first Prime Minister. And, at the time of both the baseline and second-year evaluations, we conferred in Nandi, Fiji, with the SPC's Director of Public Health who had been a graduate student we had known at the University of California, Berkeley. She kept us posted on the political ramifications of, and the bureaucratic shenanigans inherent in the evaluation study. (The SPC, dominated by Australians but headquartered in French New Caledonia vs. the Vanuatu Ministry of Education, dominated by the British!)

We might have included indigenous persons on our team, but we could find only one, a former Mele-Maat teacher. He worked with us the first year but was not as successful as we were in interviewing Mele-Maat pupils. We had more success with an

Australian anthropologist who was studying the Mele language and lived in the village but he left during the baseline study. On our sabbatical, we interviewed the director of the SPC and key members of his staff in Noumea, New Caledonia. Several months later, we met in London, England, with the deposed Vanuatu Minister of Education, and did a postmortem of our experience. From all these meetings, came insights on what more might have been done or simply done differently. Yet, had we known in the beginning the problems we would encounter, we might have been reluctant to undertake the study at all!

IMPLICATIONS

What Have We Accomplished? We started out to evaluate the quality of the teaching of English as a second language and thereby to show how a theory of language as communication worked out in an immersion-type program. Our hunches about the program and the naturalistic theory of language acquisition have been confirmed. The question about the teaching of English as a second language at Mele-Maat, though far from fool-proof, is clearly that it is of good quality and that definitely the teachers' and children's English was (is) understandable. Compared to other Polynesians, Mele-Maat students stood out in listening and reading achievement. Compared to ESL pupils in other nations, they made the same oral and written errors that are made by US upper class children the evaluators have taught. Our hypothesis is that these errors are inherent in the nature of English as a language and that whether it is a first or second language, the same errors are encountered because of the idiosyncratic nature of the structure of English.

The children whose second language we have assessed were (are) lacking in things material; isolated, "disadvantaged" by modern standards,[10] and required to "distance" themselves from their own native tongue and culture with attendant negative effects. Yet they were (are) highly motivated to learn English from indigenous teachers who are interested in improving themselves, particularly in English and the teaching of it.

How do we account for this? To begin with, the teachers were (are) among the most respected people in the village. Recall four of them were men in a society where the roles of men and women are very traditional. Their continued interest in better teaching was heightened by the SPC's staff development program and by the Hawthorne Effect of the evaluation study. For the pupils, economic and social mobility from the Polynesian lifestyle of a tropical island was (is) by way of speaking, reading, and writing in a "foreign" tongue. The motivation to succeed is strong in the Mele-Maat children, sustained and supported as it is by home community, country, and their hope one day to participate in the world that produces the jet airplanes that daily fly over their village.

Inevitably, such conclusions bring us to our own country where many children not only avoid a second language but do not do well in one, and where teaching is seldom honored. Is there something to be learned from Mele-Maat? Is it something we lost? Will we ever get it back? In Michener's words, " . . .lovely beyond description . . . ."

FOOTNOTES

[1]"The oceanic horizon is vast, the island habitat is small, its frontiers is the outer reef, the community is confined and inbred, its activities are traditional, and repetitive, modulated to the tones of the weather and the rhythm of the ocean --- and what is there to possess, when what is grown or caught consumed at the next meal?" Morris West: The Navigator, 1977.

[2]"Teachers are socialized to attribute educational significance to the words they utter and to the message contained in the words--Saying is Teaching. It is not a long jump from there to the notion that telling pupils 'to behave' is tantamount to teaching them how to behave . . . Because the traditional form of direct instruction allows teachers maximum 'air time' it means that in their opinion this set of classroom conditions provides them with the best means possible for influencing their pupils' behavior, academic and social." Shoram Shlomo: Cooperative Learning in the Classroom. 1984.

[3]This is also was typical of the instruction observed in math, history, geography, science and the arts.

[4]The SPC selected the GAP Reading Comprehension Test prior to appointing and employing the evaluation team. We objected strenuously to its use because it had been normed on Australian children for whom English was their first (and in most cases) only language. Nevertheless, it was used in the baseline evaluation because we had nothing better to offer. It was not until almost a year later that our search for a more appropriate norm comparison group lead us to ETS in Berkeley, three blocks from our campus office, at the time when they were developing norms for MATS.

[5]"The types of errors in English that Chinese-, Japanese- and Norwegian-speaking children make while learning English were similar" (Chávez-Chávez, 1984).

[6]The Parea Scribal Fluency Rating Scale, developed by Jacob Parea of San Francisco State University, has 24 scales. They include the concept of a sentence as a single unit of thought, ability to write and punctuate a complete sentence; demonstrate the absence of run-on sentences and sentence fragments; the ability to use a variety of sentence patterns, incorporate prepositional phrases in sentences, make appropriate use of pronouns and modifiers, pronoun/antecedents and subject/verb agreement; transition between sentences; tense/word/language consistency throughout a paragraph; use of paraphrasing in a dialogue; develop a narrative paragraph and a descriptive paragraph; provide transition between paragraphs and use of incidents/examples/reasons in an argumentative paragraph; and the like.

[7]The PEFL Project (Performance Evaluation in Foreign Language), funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, involved UC faculty in French, German, Spanish, and teachers from Bay Area high school language departments. Its purpose was to give greater emphasis to informal conversation in language classes and to develop and standardize a system of oral testing of students' language acquisition.

[8]In comparison with the baseline year, there was a substantial increase in textbooks, thanks to the SPC. In the baseline year, there was one book for each 2.5 pupils. Now there was a book for each one. The added textbooks and other material resources contributed to pupal (and teacher) motivation and morale, and progress in learning, perhaps.

[9]One of the criteria for immersion programs is that teachers are sensitive to the culture and language of the students. In this connection, Asel, the second class teacher, was the daughter of the Village Chief; and Edwin, the fourth class teacher was a long-time member of the Village Council and a religious dignitary. Obviously, the status of the teachers with the children transcended their role in the school.

[10]The Mele-Maat School has no electricity, no glass windows, no running water.

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Abstract

The author headed a team of Australian and U.S. researchers who evaluated an immersion program for teaching English as a second language in Vanuatu, an independent South Pacific nation. The two-year study was sponsored by the South Pacific Commission who chose the Mele-Maat School in Vanuatu as a typical British-administered Polynesian school where all instruction was in English, beginning in the 1st grade.

The question under study was: what is the quality of the teaching of English? The Tate System of English Language Instruction used throughout the South Pacific is based jon the empiricist or naturalistic theory of language acquisition and the evaluation was designed to test the efficacy of that theory. The first year of the study was used to gather baseline data and the procedures were replicated the second year.

Methodologies included standardized tests, observations, video and audio taping, interviews of teachers and pupils, case studies of pupils, and oral and written language sample assessments by panels of U.S. language experts.

The findings were that the oral and written English of Mele-Maat pupils was of acceptable, understandable quality by U.S. standards and that, on the Education Testing Service's Michonesian Achievement Test Series, the Mele-Maat students were outstanding in listening and reading achievement.